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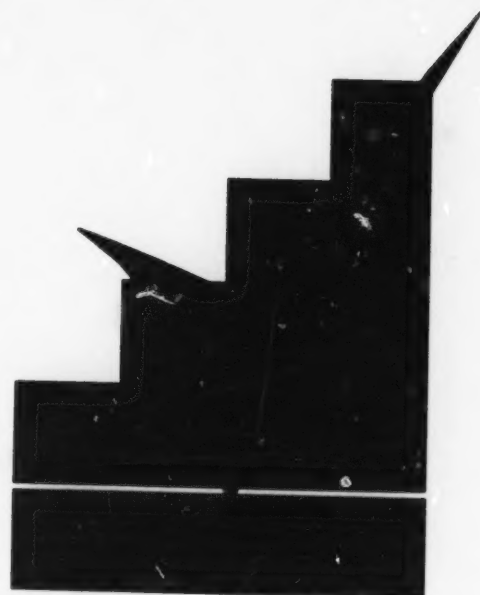
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ABSTRACT

This booklet outlines the requirements in Connecticut for gaining approval for educational programs enrolling veterans. Any educational institution which enrolls, or is likely to enroll, veterans in postsecondary programs must be approved by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education (DHE) in order for veterans to receive government education benefits. The institution's publications, programs, and policies must be approved. Programs and institutions are subject to periodic re-approval, and must seek revised approval for any new programs or changes in existing programs. Accredited institutions are evaluated in 17 specific areas, while non-accredited institutions must meet additional requirements. Institutions must appoint a certifying official as a point of contact with the DHE, and are subject to annual visits to review their compliance with approval requirements. The address and telephone number of the DHE are provided, as well as a glossary of terms. (MDM)

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*HOW TO GAIN APPROVAL
FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
AND INSTITUTIONS
ENROLLING VETERANS*

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
(STATE APPROVING AGENCY)
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

NE027 726

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Veterans in Connecticut receive nearly \$4 million a year in federal dollars to help with educational costs. These benefits are awarded only if veterans attend **approved** postsecondary programs, schools or colleges.

This guide summarizes – for school and college officials – the requirements for gaining approval for educational programs enrolling veterans.

Approval ensures that these programs lead either to a formal degree or to a vocational or professional objective. Approval also allows the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to determine individual benefit amounts and length of assistance as well as to monitor a veteran's academic progress and credits earned.

In Connecticut, the Department of Higher Education serves as the State Approving Agency for veterans' programs, as provided by Title 38 of the United States Code.

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS OR SCHOOLS MUST BE APPROVED?

Any educational institution which enrolls, or is likely to enroll, veterans in postsecondary programs must be approved by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education. Examples are:

- colleges and universities
- private occupational schools
- cosmetology schools
- hospital training and residency programs
- high school diploma, GED or post-diploma certificate programs

WHAT NEEDS TO BE APPROVED?

- *Publications* such as catalogs, student handbooks and class schedules.
- *Programs* leading to an educational or immediate vocational goal such as a degree, certificate, postgraduate residency, or non-collegiate technical or trade program. (Programs offered at branch campuses or facilities other than main campuses are approved separately.)
- *Policies* on attendance, academic progress, evaluation of credit for prior education and training, student conduct and specific types of instruction such as television courses, independent study, practicums or internships, English-as-a-Second Language or other developmental programs.

Changes to any of these publications, programs or policies are to be reported to the Department of Higher Education. Failure to do so could result in immediate suspension of approval and the interruption of benefits to veterans.

HOW TO APPLY FOR APPROVAL

There are three types of approval: Initial, Re-Approval and Revised Approval.

Initial Approval

This is the first-time approval of a program, school or college.

For a school or college, initial approval involves the submission of a completed application to the Department of Higher Education followed by a site visit. For a new program at an already-approved institution, a letter will suffice and a site visit may be conducted.

Schools and colleges applying for the first time should submit a written request to the Department of Higher Education, asking for an application and indicating whether they:

- are accredited by a regional or specialized accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education for financial aid purposes. (Institutions unsure of their status may contact the Department of Higher Education.)
- are licensed by an appropriate Connecticut state licensing body.
- have been in continuous operation for at least two years (applies only to for-profit schools).

Re-Approval

Periodically, the Department of Higher Education will update an institution's approval. This re-approval is initiated by a letter from the Department of Higher Education asking for copies of a school's publications and other information.

The timetable of these requests depends on the type of institution and the expiration date of its last approved catalog. Institutions are required, however, to notify the Department of Higher Education in a timely manner of any new catalog editions.

Revised Approval

Between re-approvals, specific changes, such as new programs, are treated as revisions to current approval.

To gain revised approval, a school must notify the Department of Higher Education in writing upon:

- printing revised catalogs, handbooks or schedules. Two sets of each publication – certified by a school official that the information is "true in content and policy" – must be sent to the Department of Higher Education.
- adding new programs. (For-profit schools must meet the two-year rule of continuous operation unless their new programs are similar in character to current offerings.)
- changing a program's name or curriculum. (For-profit schools must include changes to the length of their programs and number of clock hours.)
- naming new Certifying Officials.
- adding facilities or branch campuses, or changing an address.
- changing ownership.
- revisions in accreditation or state licensure status.
- altering currently approved policies affecting standards of progress, attendance, student conduct, credit for previous learning and policies relating to practicums, independent study or cooperative education.

✓ **WHAT DOES APPROVAL COVER?**

Accredited institutions are approved in the areas listed below. Non-accredited institutions have additional requirements as also noted.

The Department of Higher Education will evaluate a school's compliance in each of these areas, based on federal regulations, state statutes and current practices.

Approval Criteria	Accredited Institutions	Non-Accredited Institutions
Period of Operation	CFR 21.4251	CFR 21.4251
Accreditation Status	CFR 21.4253	CFR 21.4254(a)
Quality, Content and Length		CFR 21.4254(c)(1)
Qualifications of Personnel		CFR 21.4254(c)(1), (c)(2), (c)(3), (c)(12)
Adequacy of Facilities		CFR 21.4254(b)(10), (c)(2)
Financial Soundness		CFR 21.4254(c)(9)
Advertising, Sales, Enrollment Practices	CFR 21.4252(h)	CFR 21.4252(h), CFR 21.4254(c)(10)
Enrollment Policy	CFR 21.4253(e)(2)	CFR 21.4254(b)(4)
School Calendar		CFR 21.4254(b)(3), (c)(1)
Fee Schedule		CFR 21.4254(b)(8)
Refund Policy		CFR 21.4254(c)(13), (b)(9), CFR 21.4255
Attendance Policy	CFR 21.4253(d)(2)	CFR 21.4254(b)(5)
Progress Standards	CFR 21.4253(d)(1)(i), (d)(2), (d)(4)	CFR 21.4254(b)(6), (c)(7)
Conduct Policy	CFR 21.4253(d)(1)(i), (d)(4)	CFR 21.4254(b)(7), (c)(7)
Credit for Previous Education	CFR 21.4253(d)(3)	CFR 21.4254(b)(12), (c)(4)
Programs Precluded	CFR 21.4252	CFR 21.4252, CFR 21.4265(a)
Enrollment Limitations	CFR 21.4201	CFR 21.4201, CFR 21.4254(c)(11)
Programs at a Branch or Extension	CFR 21.4266	CFR 21.4266
Program Outlines		CFR 21.4254(c)(5), (b)(11)
Resident Instruction	CFR 21.4200(o)(i), (g), (r); 21.4280(f)	CFR 21.4200(o)(i), (g), (r); 21.4280(f)
Cooperative Training	CFR 21.4233(a)	CFR 21.4233(a)
Correspondence	CFR 21.4200(o)(iii), CFR 21.4256	CFR 21.4200(o)(iii), CFR 21.4256
Independent Study	CFR 21.4280(c)	CFR 21.4280(c)
Practical Training	CFR 21.4265	CFR 21.4265
Combinations of Instruction	CFR 21.4233, CFR 21.4273(c), CFR 21.4279	CFR 21.4233, CFR 21.4273(c), CFR 21.4279

Courtesy of *The National Training Curriculum for State Approving Agencies*,
National Association of State Approving Agencies
CFR = Code of Federal Regulations

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL?

The Certifying Official, named by a school or college, acts as that institution's liaison with the Department of Higher Education. This person informs the Department of any changes requiring approval and sends certified copies of the school's publications to the Department. During site and supervisory visits, the Certifying Official meets with Department of Higher Education staff to provide necessary files and information.

WHAT ARE SUPERVISORY VISITS?

Unlike site visits which occur at the time of initial approval, supervisory visits are conducted annually by the Department of Higher Education to review an institution's compliance with veterans' approval requirements.

For a supervisory visit, schools should have available files covering each veteran and all information showing attendance, transfer credit, student transcripts and enrollment status. In addition, the Department may request meetings with other staff, faculty and students.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED APPROVAL?

To maintain approval, both accredited and non-accredited schools and colleges must meet the following conditions.

■ The catalog or bulletin must include an institution's:

1. Standards of progress (which define the grading system, minimum grades considered satisfactory, conditions for interruption for unsatisfactory grades or progress, description of probationary periods and conditions for dismissal and readmittance).
2. Attendance policy.
3. Conduct policy.
4. Progress records furnished to students.

■ The school must maintain:

1. A written record of a veteran's previous education and training, clearly indicating that appropriate credit for prior learning has been given and training shortened proportionately.
2. Cumulative individual records containing the results of each enrollment period, including all courses and grades.
3. Adequate records showing the progress of each veteran, including notices of course withdrawals and last dates of attendance.
4. Attendance records of veterans enrolled in courses not leading to standard college degrees.
5. Evidence that tuition and fees charged to and received from veterans are the same as those for other students.
6. Complete records and copies of all advertising, sales and enrollment materials used by or on behalf of the school for the preceding 12 months.

■ The school agrees to:

1. Enforce all policies.
2. Notify the Department of Veterans Affairs when veterans do not achieve satisfactory academic progress.
3. Notify the Department of Veterans Affairs within 30 days of all changes in hours of credit or attendance, including interruption or termination.
4. Notify the Department of Higher Education of any changes affecting

- approved programs, including changes to location, course offerings, degree requirements and academic regulations.
5. Make available during regular business hours all required records outlined above to representatives of the Department of Higher Education and veterans' officials during periodic on-site visits.

In addition to the above, the following conditions regarding refunds and evaluations apply to all **non-accredited** schools:

Refunds

A pro rata refund policy must be in place which assures that the amount charged for tuition, fees and other charges for a portion of a course does not exceed the approximate pro rata portion of the total charges for tuition, fees and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the course bears to the total length; and

1. Registration fees cannot exceed \$10 or they become subject to the pro rata refund policy.
2. Breakage fees cover only the exact amount of the breakage, with the remainder to be refunded.
3. Only the exact amount of charges for consumable supplies may be retained, with the remainder refunded.
4. Refunds for books, supplies and equipment furnished by the school will be made in full for the amount charged for unissued books, supplies and equipment. Issued items may be disposed of at a veteran's discretion.
5. Refund policies more favorable to veterans than pro rata refunds are acceptable; otherwise, schools may charge a sum not greater than 10% from the exact pro rata portion of such tuition, fees and other charges that the length of the completed portion of the course bears to its total length; the exact pro ration will be determined on the ratio of the number of instructional days in the course.

Evaluations

Evaluations of the following must occur: the quality, content and length of programs; personnel qualifications; adequacy of resources and financial soundness; school calendars and fee schedules.

WHO TO CONTACT

For questions on program or institutional approval . . .

Connecticut Department of Higher Education
(State Approving Agency)
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2391
566-6125 566-7865 (FAX)
Thomas M. Tynan
Patricia A. Santoro

For questions on veterans benefits . . .

Veterans should contact:

Hartford Regional Office
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

278-3230 (Hartford area) 1-800-827-1000 (Outside Hartford)

School and college officials should call:

Educational Liaison Representative: Kathleen Metivier 240-3306
Compliance Survey Specialist: David Kloskowski 240-3306



GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS

ACCREDITATION	Status achieved after an educational program or institution voluntarily and successfully evaluates itself in relation to standards and goals established by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
APPROVAL CRITERIA	Federal or state standards used by State Approving Agencies to evaluate programs and institutions.
BRANCH	An auxiliary location of a school or college.
CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	A representative of an educational institution authorized to sign and submit documents verifying a veteran's enrollment, change in status, receipt of advance payment and any other circumstances affecting the amount or duration of educational benefits.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations: interpretations of the United States Code compiled by federal agencies.
CLOCK HOUR	A unit of measurement used to recognize a student's completion of a particular course, number of job hours or achievement of specific skills.
CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING	Acknowledgment by an educational institution of the education, experience and training received by a veteran before entering an instructional program; usually leads to a reduction in the veteran's total program requirement.
CREDIT HOUR	A unit of measurement used to recognize a student's completion of a particular course, based usually on a semester or quarter-term system.
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs.
DVACO	Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office which receives and evaluates veterans' applications for educational benefits, determines the amount and duration of benefits, and processes program evaluation information from State Approving Agencies.
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE	Benefits paid to veterans in the form of monthly monetary assistance while veterans are enrolled in approved instructional programs.
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	Any public or independent secondary school, vocational school, correspondence school, business school, two-year or four-year college, university, professional school, scientific or technical institution or other institution offering instruction to adults.
EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE	Goal of an instructional program such as an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, a certificate or a diploma.

ELR	Education Liaison Representative employed at regional offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs. This person is responsible for processing information from State Approving Agencies and for transferring that information to DVA forms, working with educational officials regarding veterans' certification, and evaluating institutions for compliance with veterans' certification requirements.
GED	General Educational Development: an achievement test leading to a certificate deemed equivalent to a high school diploma.
GI BILL	Federal legislation enacted following World War II providing comprehensive educational and re-adjustment benefits to veterans.
IHL	Institution of Higher Learning: a college, university, technical or business school or similar institution offering postsecondary instruction leading to an associate or higher degree; also can refer to a hospital offering postsecondary programs whether or not the hospital grants degrees.
INDEPENDENT STUDY	Instructional method requiring interaction between students and faculty but not involving regularly scheduled class sessions.
MATRICULATION	Acceptance into an institution's approved program as a student or as a degree candidate.
NCD	Non-College Degree Program: an instructional program offering courses leading to technical, business, professional or vocational diplomas or certificates.
NON-ACCREDITED PROGRAM	A program that has not been evaluated by an accrediting agency, or one that has not met accreditation standards.
PERIOD OF OPERATION	The length of time a program has been open for enrollment and has enrolled students.
PRACTICAL TRAINING	Field or laboratory experience allowing students to apply studied theory.
PROFESSIONAL	Goal of an instructional program such as licensing as an engineer, or board certification as a neurosurgeon.
PROGRAM APPROVAL	An evaluation by a State Approving Agency of instructional programs available to veterans leading to recognition of the program's compliance with applicable federal and state requirements.
PROGRAM OF EDUCATION	The combination of subjects, unit courses, or training activities needed to meet requirements for a pre-determined educational, professional or vocational objective.
PRO RATA REFUND	Return of a student's tuition and fees based on the ratio of remaining days of instruction to total days of instruction in a term.

SAA	State Approving Agency: that agency which evaluates instructional programs as required by federal laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
SIMILAR IN CHARACTER	Refers to two or more programs at a school having the same general educational objective and which use the same or related instructional processes, tools and materials.
TWO-YEAR RULE	Federal regulations requiring that an approved program at a for-profit institution be in operation for at least two years.
USC	United States Code: organized compilation of federal laws.
VETERAN	A person who has served in the United States Armed Forces or any other person eligible to receive veterans' education benefits such as active duty military personnel, reservists, guardsmen, spouses, widows and dependents.
VETERANS' EDUCATION BENEFITS	Compensation for service in the Armed Forces paid in the form of educational assistance.
VOCATIONAL OBJECTIVE	Goal of an instructional program culminating in an occupational skill needed for entry-level employment.

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